

Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt

(The Spider)

Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt was revealed in Makkah and it has 69 Verses and 7 sections

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 7

الْم ﴿١﴾ أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ
 ﴿٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
 وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكٰذِبِينَ ﴿٣﴾ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ
 يَسْبِقُونَا ۗ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٤﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ
 أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لَآتٍ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ
 لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
 الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا
 يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

'Alif, Lām, Mīm. [1] Do people think that they will be left (at ease) only on their saying, "We believe" and will not be put to test? [2] And We have surely tested those who were before them. So Allah will surely know the ones who are truthful, and He will surely know the liars. [3]

Is it that those who are committing evils think that they will escape from Us? Evil is what they decide. [4]

Whoever hopes for meeting Allah (must be sure that) Allah's appointed time has to come. And He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing. [5] And whoever strives, strives for his own benefit. Surely Allah is independent of all the worlds. [6]

And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We will expiate their bad deeds and will give them a better reward (than their expectation) for what they used to do. [7]

Commentary

وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ (And will not be put to test - 29:2). It is derived from *Fitnah*, which means trial or test. The believers, especially the prophets and pious, have to go through many a trials in this world. However, they always come out victors in the end. These trials and tribulations sometimes come as a result of enmity of the infidels and sinners by way of afflictions, as have been experienced by the Holy Prophet ﷺ and many other prophets, and at times in the form of diseases, as was experienced by Sayyidnā Ayyūb عليه السلام. And for others many of these trial types are combined together.

Although the background under which this verse was revealed, according to many narrations, was the harassment faced by the companions of the Holy Qurān from the infidels at the time of *hijrah*, but otherwise its message is common to all times. The sense is that the pious, saints and scholars will face the trials and tribulations in all times. (Qurṭubī).

فَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا (So Allah will surely know the ones who are truthful - 29:3). It means that through tests and hardships the good and the bad, and the sincere and non-sincere will be differentiated, because if the hypocrites are mixed up with the sincere believers and are not identified, it may create a number of problems. The object of this verse is to elucidate the difference between the good and the bad, and between the sincere and the non-sincere. The expression used for this purpose is that Allah Ta‘ālā will find out who are the true ones and who are the liars. Since He knows about every one even before his birth, whether he is a true one or a liar, the sense carried by this expression is that tests and trials are conducted to bring the distinction of good and bad on surface, so

that others should also know.

Hakīm-ul-Ummah Thanāwī رحمه الله تعالى has copied the argument of his Shaikh, Maulānā Muḥammad Ya'qūb رحمه الله تعالى that sometimes people are addressed by descending down to their level of intellect. The common man makes distinction between the sincere and the hypocrites by testing him out. Therefore, according to their approach of understanding Allah Ta'ālā has said that, through various means, We would find out who is sincere and who is not, even though He knows every thing from the very beginning.

Verses 8 - 9

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ
لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ
﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٩﴾

And We have instructed man to do good to his parents. And if they insist upon you that you should ascribe partners to Me, then do not obey them. To Me is your return; then I shall tell you about what you used to do. [8] And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall include them among the righteous. [9]

Commentary

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ (And We have instructed man - 29:8). *Waṣiyyah* (وصية) means to call someone for some action, when the call is based on advice and well wishing. (Maḥzarī)

بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا (to do good to his parents - 29:8). The Word *Husn* (حُسن) is an infinitive which means 'to be good'. What is meant here is to adopt good behavior. The meaning of the sentence is quite clear that Allah Ta'ālā has advised man to treat his parents kindly.

وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي (And if they insist upon you that you should ascribe partners to Me - 29:8). It should be taken note of that the limit of kind treatment with parents should not go beyond the point where it comes in conflict with the injunctions of Allah Ta'ālā. If they force toward infidelity or associating some one with Allah, then they must not be obeyed, as

advised in a *ḥadīth* لَطَاعَةَ لِمَخْلُوقٍ فِي مَعْصِيَةِ الْخَالِقِ (A created being must not be obeyed in disobedience of the Creator). This *ḥadīth* has been reported by Imām Aḥmad and Ḥākim who has held it as Ṣaḥīḥ).

This verse was revealed in connection with Sayyidnā Sa’d Ibn Abī Waqqāṣ ؓ. He was one of the ten companions to whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ had given the good news of being in paradise, and who are called *Al-‘Ashrah Al-mubashsharah*. He was an extremely obedient son of his mother and was always alert to look after her comfort. When his mother, Ḥāmmah bint Abī Sufyān, learnt that her son, Sa’d, had accepted Islam, she got very upset and warned him against that, and then swore an oath that she would neither eat nor drink unless he turned back to his ancestral religion, or she would die of thirst and hunger, and he would be blamed universally for being the killer of his mother. (Muslim, Tirmidhī). Through this Qur’ānic verse Sayyidnā Sa’d ؓ was commanded not to listen to his mother.

Baghawī has reported in his narration that the mother of Sayyidnā Sa’d ؓ did not eat and drink for a day and night, and according to some other versions, for three days and three nights, and sticking to her oath, remained hungry and thirsty. For Sayyidnā Sa’d ؓ mother’s love and obedience was one thing, but Allah’s command was another, which naturally took precedence over every thing else. So he went to her and said to her firmly ‘Dear mother, if there were hundred spirits in your body, and they were departing one by one, I would not have deserted my religion even seeing that scenario. It is now up to you whether you eat and drink or die. In any case I cannot abandon my religion’. Having been disappointed by his firmness, she started eating food.

Verses 10 - 13

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَقُولُ آمَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ
النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَلَئِنْ جَاءَ نَصْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ لَيَقُولَنَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا
مَعَكُمْ ۗ أَوْلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنْفِقِينَ ﴿١١﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا

لِّلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا وَلْنَحْمِلْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحَامِلِينَ مِنْ
 خَطِيئَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلِيَحْمِلْنَ أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَأَثْقَالًا
 مَعَ أَثْقَالِهِمْ وَلَيُسْئَلُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

And among men there are those who say, "We believe in Allah", but when they are persecuted in (the way of) Allah, they take the persecution of men, as equal to the punishment of Allah. And should any help comes from your Lord, they will certainly say, "We were with you."⁽¹⁾ Is it not that Allah knows well what lies in the hearts of the people of all the worlds? [10] ⁽²⁾ And Allah will certainly know those who believe and He will certainly know the hypocrites. [11] And those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Follow our way, and we will bear the burden of your sins." And they are not (able) to bear the burden of their sins in the least. Indeed they are pure liars. [12] And they shall certainly bear their own loads, and some loads alongwith their own loads. And they will certainly be questioned about what they used to forge. [13]

Commentary

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا (And those who disbelieve say - 29:12). The infidels had tried all sorts of devices to mislead the Muslims and to hinder the progress of their faith. Sometimes they tried to get hold of Muslims by show of power and wealth, and at others by trying to put doubts in their minds. This verse mentions one such move made by them. They asked Muslims not to leave their ancestral religion in fear of torments in the Hereafter, because no such thing was going to happen at the first place, but even the belief of the Muslims about the Hereafter would come true, they (the infidels) were willing to undertake that they themselves would bear all the torments in the Hereafter on behalf of the Muslims, and the Muslims

1. It means that such people join the infidels when they apprehend some kind of torture from them, but when Allah's help will come to the Muslims in a battle against the infidels, they will pretend to be Muslims on the plea that they had joined the infidels only because they feared to be persecuted by them.
2. The sense is that they did not believe in Islam with their hearts, and this fact cannot be concealed from Him, because He knows whatever lies in the hearts of the people.

would not suffer at all.

A similar incident is related in the last *rukū'* of Sūrah An-Najm **أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا وَأَكْدَى** (Have you seen the one who turned his back, and gave a little, then stopped - 53:33,34). Once some infidels hoodwinked a naïve friend of theirs by saying that if he gave them some money here in this world, they would save him in the Hereafter by taking upon themselves his share of the torment. He in fact started paying them the amount, but later stopped it. His foolishness and the absurdity of his action are related in detail in Sūrah An-Najm.

A similar sort of offer made by the infidels to the Muslims is related here. In response to this offer Allah Ta'ālā has said that those who say so are liars. They would not take upon them the burden of any one else. **وَمَا هُمْ بِحَامِلِينَ مِنْ خَطِيئَتِهِمْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ** (And they are not (able) to bear the burden of their sins in the least. Indeed they are pure liars. - 29:12). It means that when they will see the severity of torment in the Hereafter, they would not dare to take upon themselves the share of any one else. Hence their promise is false. It is also commented in Sūrah An-Najm that even if they were ready to take upon them the torment of others, Allah Ta'ālā will not allow it. Because it is against the code of justice that someone else is made to undergo the punishment for the crime committed by another person.

The other point made by the Qur'an here is that although they will not be able to relieve others by taking on themselves the recompense for the sins others have committed, but this much is true that their effort to misguide others and to drift them away from the righteous path is by itself a big sin, which will be loaded upon them in addition to their own sins. This way they will be carrying their own sins as well as that of misguiding others.

Invitation to sin is also a sin, the punishment of which is the same as that of committing it.

It comes out quite clearly from this verse that the one who invites others to sin, or helps others in committing it, is as much a criminal as the one who actually commits it. A *ḥadīth* quoted by Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah **رضي الله عنه** and Anas Ibn Mālik **رضي الله عنه** relates that once the Holy Prophet **ﷺ** said 'Anyone inviting people toward righteousness would be entitled to the

collective blessings of all those who would act on his advice, without any reduction from the share of their reward; and anyone inviting people toward sin will also suffer the collective punishment of all those who would act upon his invitation to sin, without any reduction from the punishment of those who have committed that sin'. (Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Qurṭubī)

Verses 14 - 18

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ
عَامًا فَأَخَذَهُمُ الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَصْحَابَ
السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ ۖ ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ
مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا ۚ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا
لَهُ ۗ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِنْ تُكَذِّبُوا فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ۗ
وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلْغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٨﴾

And We sent Nūḥ to his people. So he stayed with them one thousand, less fifty, years. Then the Cyclone seized them, and they were transgressors. [14] So We saved him and the people of the Ark, and made it a sign for all the worlds. [15] And (We sent) Ibrāhīm when he said to his people, "Worship Allah and fear Him. That is better for you if you know. [16] You only worship idols beside Allah and you invent a lie. In fact those whom you worship beside Allah do not have power to give you provision. So seek provision near Allah and worship Him and be grateful to Him. To Him you are to be returned. [17] And if you belie me, then many nations have belied (their messengers) before you. And the messenger has no obligation but to convey the message clearly." [18]

Commentary

It was described in the previous verses that infidels keep on their

opposition and afflictions on Muslims as a routine. In the above verses the Holy Prophet ﷺ was consoled by relating some incidents of earlier people that this practice of harassment of believers by the infidels is going on for long. But they never lost hope due to such harassments. Therefore, you too should not care about the troubles afflicted by the infidels, and should keep on performing firmly your prophetic obligations.

Among the earlier prophets, the story of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام was related first. It was so because he was the very first prophet who had to confront with the infidelity and association of others with Allah Ta‘ālā. Secondly, any other prophet did not experience the extent of harassment he had to put up with from his own people. It was because he had the exclusive honour from Allah Ta‘ālā of having very long life. His life span of nine hundred and fifty years (950) years as quoted by the Holy Qur‘ān is true without any element of doubt. However, in certain narrations it is mentioned that this relates to the period of his preaching and teaching, and there are additional periods of his life before this and after the deluge. والله أعلم.

Living such an unusually long life continuously in preaching and teaching, and enduring all sorts of afflictions, including drubbing and strangling throughout this period, from the infidels was a special distinction of Sayyidnā Nūḥ عليه السلام. Despite all these difficulties and tribulations he did not lose heart ever.

The second story is that of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام, who too passed through many testing trials. First the fire of Namrud, then migration from Syria to a howling deserted place, then slaughtering of the son. All these tribulations tell about the hardships he had gone through. Within the story of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام a brief mention is also made of Lūṭ عليه السلام and his people. Then upto the end of the Sūrah mention is made of some other prophets and their antagonistic people. All these stories were related to keep the spirit of the Holy Prophet ﷺ high, and to make Muslims steadfast to the religion.

Verses 19 - 23

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ ۗ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ
يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ اللَّهُ

يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يُعَذِّبُ
 مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ
 بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ۗ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ
 وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلِقَائِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ
 يَكُونُونَ مِنْ رَحْمَتِي وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾

Did they not see how Allah originates the creation, then He will do it again. Surely this is easy for Allah. [19] Say, "Go about in the land and look how He has originated the creation. Then Allah will create the subsequent creation. Surely Allah is powerful to do everything." [20] He punishes whom He wills and has mercy on whom He wills. And to Him you are to be turned back. [21] And you are not (able) to frustrate (Allah) neither in the earth nor in the sky. And, apart from Allah, you have neither a protector nor a helper. [22] And those who deny the signs of Allah and meeting with Him, those will despair of My mercy, and those are the ones for whom there is a painful punishment. [23]

Commentary

The infidels of Makkah believed that it is Allah who has created the whole universe, but they deemed it impossible that the people will be resurrected after they once die. The present verses have described the fallacy of their view. It is stated that repeating the process of creation is much easier than its origination. It is strange that these infidels do believe that Allah has originated the creation, but they deny His power to do it again, while the latter is easier than the former. Then verse 20 has induced them to look around them to appreciate the splendors of the creation, so that they may apprehend that the One who has originated this marvelous creation can easily repeat the process. After establishing the Resurrection, the last three verses describe the punishment for those who deny it.

Verses 24 - 27

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ فَأَنْجَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ

النَّارِ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ
 مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا ۖ مَوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ۖ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ
 يَكْفُرُ بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ ۖ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۖ وَمَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا
 لَكُمْ مِنْ نَّاصِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ ۖ فَاٰمَنَ لَهُ ۖ لُوٓطًا ۖ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي ۖ
 إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٢٦﴾ ۖ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي
 ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النَّبُوَّةَ وَالكِتَابَ ۖ وَأَتَيْنَاهُ أَجْرَهُ ۖ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۖ وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ لَمِنَ
 الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

So, the response of his (Ibrāhīm's) people was none but that they said, "Kill him" or "Burn him". So Allah saved him from the fire. Surely in this there are signs for a people who believe. [24] And he (Ibrāhīm) said, "You have taken to idols instead of Allah, only because of love (you have) with each other in the worldly life. Then on the Day of Judgment you will reject each other and will curse one another. And your abode is the Fire, and you will have no helpers." [25] So Lūṭ believed in him and he (Ibrāhīm) said, "I am going to leave my homeland towards my Lord. Surely He is the Mighty, the Wise. [26] And We granted him Ishāque and Yā'qūb and assigned to his progeny prophethood and book, and gave him his reward in the world; and of course he, in the Hereafter, is one of the righteous. [27]

Commentary

(So Lūṭ believed in him and he (Ibrāhīm) said, "I am going to leave my homeland towards my Lord. - 29:26). Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام was the nephew of Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام. He was the very first one to accept faith after watching the miracle of Ibrāhīm عليه السلام in the fire of Namrūd. When Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm عليه السلام planned to migrate from his hometown, Kūthā - a township of Kūfah - along with his wife Sayyidah Sārā, who was his cousin and had accepted Islam, and Lūṭ عليه السلام, he said إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي. That is 'I am going to leave my homeland toward my Lord' It meant that he wanted to go to some place where there was no obstacle in worshipping Allah.

Ibrāhīm An-Nakha’ī and Qatādah رَحِمَهُمَا اللَّهُ تَعَالَى are of the opinion that this sentence was said by Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, because the next sentence, i.e. وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ (And We granted him Ishāque and Ya’qūb) is pointing certainly toward Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. However, some other commentators are of the view that (أِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ) (I am going to leave my homeland) was said by Lūṭ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. But in the present context, the former explanation appears more appropriate. Although Lūṭ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had accompanied Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ during this journey, but being subordinate to him, his separate mention was not called for, like Sayyidah Sārah, who was subordinate to Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ, was not mentioned separately.

First prophetic migration in world's history

Sayyidnā Ibrāhīm رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the first prophet who had to migrate from his hometown for the sake of religion. He underwent this migration at the age of 75 years. (Qurṭubī).

The reward for some actions is bestowed in this world as well

أَتَيْنَهُ أَجْرَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا (And gave his reward in the world - 29:27). That is, ‘We rewarded Ibrāhīm for his sacrifices in the way of Allah and righteous actions in this world also’. He is made popular and the Imām among the people of the world. He is respected by all alike, whether Jews, Christians or idol worshippers. In the Hereafter he will be among the Ṣālihīn (righteous) of the Paradise. It clarifies that although the real reward for good deeds will be awarded in the Hereafter, but a small part of it is also given in this world. Some authentic *āḥādīth* have also described about the award of benefits in this world against good deeds, and depraved outcome of the bad deeds. Maulānā Ḥakim-ul-Ummah رَحِمَهُ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى has put together all such acts in his booklet ‘Jazā’-ul-‘māl’ (جَزَاءُ الْأَعْمَالِ).

Verses 28 - 35

وَلَوْطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَأَتَاتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ
مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَأَتَاتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُونَ السَّبِيلَ ۗ
وَتَأْتُونَ فِي نَادِيكُمْ الْمُنْكَرَ ۗ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا
إِنَّا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي

عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى
 قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ ۚ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانُوا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
 قَالَ إِنَّ فِيهَا لُوطًا ۗ قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيهَا ۖ فَاسْتَنْجِبْنَاهُ ۖ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا
 امْرَأَتَهُ ۗ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَمَّا أَنْ جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا
 سِئَاءَ بِهِمْ ۖ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ ۗ إِنَّا
 مُنْجِيُونَكَ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَكَ ۗ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّا مُنْزِلُونَ
 عَلَى أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾
 وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَا مِنْهَا آيَةً بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

And (We sent) Lūṭ when he said to his people, "Indeed you commit the shameful act that no one in the worlds has ever preceded you in it. [28] Is it (not) a fact that you go for men (to satisfy your lust) and rob the wayfarer and commit evil in your gathering?" So the answer of his people was none but that they said, "Bring us Allah's punishment, if you are one of the truthful." [29] He said, "My Lord, help me against the people who make mischief." [30]

And when Our messengers came to Ibrāhīm with the good news, they said, "We are going to destroy the people of this town. Surely its people have been transgressors." [31] He said, "There is Lūṭ in it." They said, "We know well who is in it. We will certainly save him and his family except his wife who will be among those remaining behind." [32] And when Our messengers came to Lūṭ, he grieved for them and his heart was straitened because of them, but they said, "We are going to save you and your family, except your wife who will be among those remaining behind. We are going to bring down on the people of this town a punishment from the sky, because they used to act sinfully." [34] And We left from it (the town) an evident sign for a people who understand. [35]

Commentary

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لِنَائِبُونَ لِالْفَاحِشَةِ (And [We sent] Lūṭ when he said to his

people, "Indeed you commit the shameful act - 29:28). Here Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام has described three vicious sins of his people. One, unnatural offence of man with man; two, highway robbery against travelers; and three, commitment of sin openly before others in their group meetings. There is no specification of the third sin in the Holy Qur'ān. Thus, it is deduced that every sin, which is a sin in its own right, if committed openly with indifference, it becomes a double sin, irrespective of the type of sin. At this point, some Imāms of Tafsīr (exegesis) have listed all such sins, which these wretched persons used to commit in their meetings. For instance, throwing stones on travelers and making fun of them, as Umm Hāni' رضى الله عنها reports it in a ḥadīth. Other commentators have reported that these insolent people were in the habit of committing sins openly before all others.

Out of the three sins mentioned in this verse the first one is most disgusting, which was never committed before in the whole world, and even wild beasts abstain from it. The entire ummah is unanimous on that it is a worse sin than adultery. (Rūh)

Verses 36 - 44

وَالِى مَدِينٍ آخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۖ فَقَالَ يُقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ
الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَعْتَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ
الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي دَارِهِمْ جِثْمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَعَادَا وَتَمُودَا وَقَدْ بَيَّنَّ
لَكُمْ مِنْ مَسْكِنِهِمْ ۖ وَزَيْنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ
السَّبِيلِ وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ ۖ
وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا
سَابِقِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَكَلَّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۖ فَمِنْهُمْ مَن أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا
وَمِنْهُمْ مَن أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ ۖ وَمِنْهُمْ مَن خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ ۖ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَن أَعْرَقْنَا ۖ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ
﴿٤٠﴾ مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ ۖ

ۚ اِتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا ۚ وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ ۚ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يُدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ لِنُضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعَالِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

And (We sent) to Madyan their brother Shu'āib. So he said, "O my people, worship Allah and expect the Last Day and do not roam about in the land as mischief makers." [36] So they belied him, then they were seized by the earthquake and they remained in their homes lying on their faces. [37] And (We destroyed) 'Ād and Thamūd, and it is visible to you through their dwellings. And the Satan had beautified for them their deeds, so he prevented them from the (right) way, though they were people of insight. [38] And (We also destroyed) Qārūn and the Pharaoh and Hāmān. And surely Mūsā came to them with clear signs; so they acted arrogantly on the earth, and were not (able) to escape. [39] Thus each one of them We seized for his sin. So to some of them We sent a violent wind; and some of them were seized by a Cry; and some of them We made to sink in the earth; and some of them We drowned. And Allah was not to do injustice to them, but they used to do injustice to their own selves. [40]

The example of those who have taken to patrons other than Allah is like the spider that has made a house. And surely the weakest of houses is the house of the spider. If only they know. [41] Surely, Allah knows whatever thing they invoke beside Allah, and He is the Mighty, the Wise. [42] And these examples We site for people, and no one understands them except the knowledgeable ones. [43] Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth. Surely in this there is a sign for the believers. [44]

Commentary

The stories of the earlier people, that are mentioned in these verses

briefly, have been related in detail in the previous Sūrahs. For instance, the story of Shu'aib عليه السلام, and those of 'Ad and Thamūd have been related in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Hūd, and the incidents of Qārūn, Hāmān, and the Pharaoh have just passed in Sūrah Al- Qaṣaṣ.

وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ (They were people of insight - 29:38). This word is derived from *Istibṣār*, which means sight; and *Mustabṣir* is used for observer. The meaning of this sentence is that those who insisted on infidelity and *shirk* (associating partner with Allah) and got themselves involved in perdition and Allah's wrath were no fools or insane. They were very clever having insight, but their intelligence and sagacity was confined to mundane considerations. They did not realize that there would be a day of reckoning for all good and bad actions, when there would be complete justice, because the cruel and the oppressors move about in this world without hindrance, but those oppressed and afflicted are compelled to endure injustice. The day this injustice will finish and justice will be the order of the day is called the Hereafter. They are at a loss to comprehend this bit.

The same subject is coming ahead in Sūrah Ar-Rūm, where it is said يَعْلمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُونَ (They know what is superficial of the worldly life, but of the Hereafter they are negligent. - 30:7).

Some commentators have interpreted the meaning of وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ (They were people of insight) that these people did have faith in their heart and did understand well the necessity of the Day of Judgment, but the mundane considerations had compelled them to reject it.

وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ (And surely the weakest of houses is the house of the spider - 29:41). 'Ankabūt (عَنْكَبُوت) is the Arabic language equivalent for spider. There are different species of spiders. Some of them live underground. Apparently those are not meant here. Instead the specie of spider meant here is the one which weaves web for itself, and stays suspended in it. It attracts and kills flies in the cobweb. Among all the known types of nests, dens and other abodes of animals, the spider's web is the weakest. Even a mild breeze can break its threads. This verse has described those who worship and place their trust in any one other than Allah, are like the web of spider, which is extremely weak. The trust of those who depend on idols or any human is as weak and fragile as the

trust of a spider on its web.

Ruling

Scholars have different viewpoints in the matter of killing of spiders and removing of cobwebs from the houses. Some do not like it, because at the time of *hijrah* the spider weaved its web at the mouth of the cave *Thaur*, and thus made a place of respect for itself. Khaṭīb has reported that Sayyidnā ‘Alī عليه السلام had prohibited its killing. But Tha‘labī and Ibn ‘Aṭīyah have quoted a narration, again from Sayyidnā ‘Alī عليه السلام that says طَهِّرُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ مِنْ نَسَجِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ فَإِنَّ تَرَكَهُ يُورِثُ الْفَقْرَ (Clean your homes from the web of the spider, because its retaining causes poverty.) The chain of the narrators of both these reports is not reliable, but the second narration draws credence from other narrations in which keeping of homes clean is stressed. (Rūḥ ul-Ma‘ānī)

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا الْعُلَمَاءُ (And these examples We cite for people, and no one understands them except the knowledgeable ones. - 29:43). After comparing the weakness of the gods of disbelievers with cobweb, it is stressed that Allah Ta‘ālā provides such clear examples to elucidate the truth of Oneness. But only knowledgeable persons draw benefit from them, and the people at large do not ponder, so that they could also understand the truth.

Who is knowledgeable in the sight of Allah?

Imām Baghawī has quoted with his own *sanad* (chain of narrators) a report from Sayyidnā Jabir عليه السلام that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم recited this verse and said ‘knowledgeable is the one who ponders over Allah’s message, and acts in obedience to Him, and keeps away from the deeds that annoy Him’.

This explains that one does not become knowledgeable in the sight of Allah only by developing some understanding of Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*. To be on that high pedestal one needs to give a continual careful thought to Qur’ān, and then lead a life conforming to Qur’ānic teachings.

Musnad of Aḥmad has reproduced a narration of Sayyidnā ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Āṣ عليه السلام that he said he had learnt one thousand *amthāl* (maxims or examples) from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم. After reproducing this narration, Ibn Kathīr has observed that it was a great honour for Sayyidnā ‘Amr Ibn Al-‘Āṣ عليه السلام, because those who understand the examples (*Amthāl*)

given by Allah Ta‘ālā and His messenger are termed by the present verse as knowledgeable.

Sayyidnā ‘Amr Ibn Murrah ؓ has said that he felt very bad whenever he came across any such verse of the Holy Qur‘ān, which he could not understand, because Allah has said *وَمَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا الْعُلَمَاءُ* (And these examples We cite for people, and no one understands them except the knowledgeable). (Ibn Kathīr).

Verse 45

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

And recite (O Muḥammad) what is revealed to you of the Book and establish Ṣalāh. Surely Ṣalāh restrains from shamelessness and evil. And indeed remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing). And Allah knows what you do. [45]

Commentary

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ (And recite (O Muḥammad) what is revealed to you - 29:45). In the previous verses some incidents of a few prophets and their people were related, in which some rebellious infidels were also mentioned, who faced various divine punishments. There were also some words of solace for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and consolation for the believers, in that how the earlier prophets had endured various types of hardships. There was also persuasion for continuing the work of teaching and preaching, and not to lose heart under any circumstances.

A brief but comprehensive formula for the reform of people

In the above verses the Holy Prophet ﷺ is advised a brief but comprehensive formula for inviting people towards Allah. If acted upon, this formula opens the avenues leading to practicing religion with all its precept, and the natural hurdles that come in the way in practicing it are removed easily. This elixir formula is made up of two parts; one is the recitation of the Holy Qur‘ān, and the other, establishment of prayers. Although the real object here was to make all people adhere to the two basics, but for the sake of persuasion and emphasis, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was directed first to practice them, because it was much easy for the

followers to act upon the teachings of Islam when they saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ practicing it.

Out of the two components of the formula, recitation of Qur‘ān is the spirit behind and foundation of every thing. The next in order is the establishment of prayers, which has been selected for mentioning here to the exclusion of all other acts and obligations. The wisdom behind placing prayer above all other worships has also been explained that it keeps one away from shameless and obscene acts. The prayer is supreme among all the worships and obligations in its own right, and is a pillar to the religion. *Faḥshā’* are all those shameless and obscene acts and utterances that are regarded bad and vile in all societies, no matter Islamic or non-Islamic, for instance, adultery, murder, abduction, robbery, lying, etc. *Munkar* (translated above as 'evil') is that act or utterance on which there is unanimity of opinion of all religious jurists as being impermissible or *ḥarām*. Therefore, if there is a difference of opinion by the religious jurists, no one of the two views can be regarded as *munkar*. The two words, *faḥshā’* and *munkar*, encompass in them all the crimes, and sins - both open and concealed - which are mischievous by themselves and a great hurdle in the way of righteous deeds.

How does prayer stop from all sins?

According to innumerable authentic *āḥādīth*, this verse means that there is a peculiar effect of the establishment of *ṣalāh* (prayer) that whoever performs it stops committing sins, provided it is not offered just for the sake of offering. One should offer prayers strictly in accordance with the wordings of Qur‘ān, that is for its *iqāmah* (establishment). The meaning of *iqāmah* of *Ṣalāh* is to perform it both inwardly and outwardly with the manners and mores the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to perform. All along his life, he stressed that the body, clothes and the place of offering prayer should be clean. Offering prayer in congregation, and to perform all actions in line with Sunnah are outward mores of the prayer. As for inward mores, one should stand in prayer with fear of Allah and humility in a manner that he is begging from Him. The one who establishes prayer, Allah Ta‘ālā graces him with Divine help to tread the righteous path, and to keep away from all types of sins. If someone does not get rid of sins despite offering prayers, then there is some flaw in his prayers. It is mentioned in a *ḥadīth* reported by Sayyidnā ‘Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣayn ؓ

that the Holy Prophet ﷺ was asked about the sense of the verse إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ (Surely, Ṣalāh restrains from shamelessness and evil - 29:45). The Holy Prophet ﷺ Replied, عَنْ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ فَلَا صَلَاةَ لَهُ، (رواه ابن أبي حاتم بسنده عن عمران بن حصين والطبراني من حديث ابى معاوية) That is 'if anyone's prayer did not stop him from his sins then his prayer is nothing'.

Sayyidnā Ibn Mas'ūd ؓ has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once said لَا صَلَاةَ لِمَنْ لَمْ يُطِيعِ الصَّلَاةَ (Ibn Jarir), that is 'one who does not obey his prayer his prayer is nothing'. The obedience of prayer is that one should keep away from sins (*faḥshā'* and *munkar*).

While interpreting this verse Sayyidnā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ has said that if someone's prayer does not make him do the righteous deeds and prevent from sins, then such a prayer would draw him even farther from Allah Ta'ālā.

Ibn Kathīr has reproduced all the three narrations in one place and has concluded that these *āḥādīth* are not *marfū'* which means that these words are not the words spoken by the Holy Prophet ﷺ but are the expositions put forward in explaining this verse by the three scholars namely, 'Imrān Ibn Ḥuṣain, 'Abdullāh Ibn Mas'ūd, and Ibn 'Abbās ؓ.

Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ has reported in a narration that someone came to the Holy Prophet ﷺ and said 'a person offers *tahajjud* (night prayer) at night, and steals after the day break'. The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, 'The prayer will soon desist him from stealing'. (Ibn Kathīr). Some other narrations have also related that after this remark from him he stopped stealing.

Answer to a doubt

Some persons express their doubt that many a people offer prayers regularly and yet indulge in grave sins, which apparently looks in conflict with this verse. Some have replied to this doubt by explaining that Ṣalāh forbids those offering prayers from sins, but it is not necessary that all take up the advice in right earnest, and stop committing sins. After all Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* also desist every one from committing sins, yet many do not pay any attention to the advice, and do not refrain from sinning.

But most commentators have explained that the verse is not in the form of a command, but it is the effect of prayer, which desists those who

offer their prayers regularly from committing sins, by Divine help. But if one is not graced with the Divine help to get rid of sins, it means that there is some flaw in his prayers, and he has not been able to fulfill the requirements of *iqāmah* of Ṣalāh. Above referred *āḥādīth* also endorse this view.

وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ (And indeed remembrance of Allah is the greatest (thing). And Allah knows what you do. - 29:45). Here remembrance of Allah could mean the remembrance carried out in the prayer or otherwise is supreme. The other meaning of the word could be that when His servants remember Him, it is His promise that He too remembers them before angels فَادْكُرُونِي أَذْكُرْكُمْ (Remember Me, and I will remember you - 2:152). For the servants who worship Allah it is the biggest blessing. Many a companions and the generation that followed them have endorsed this interpretation. Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Kathīr have also preferred this view. There is also an allusion under this view that the real reason of getting rid of sins through prayers is that Allah Ta'ālā also remembers the servant at that time before the angels. Thus its auspiciousness relieves him from his sins.

Verses 46 - 55

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ۖ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقَوْلُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ وَاللَّهُنَا وَاللَّهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ ۗ فَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَمِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ ۗ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لِأَرْتَابِ الْمُبِطِلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ بَلْ هُوَ آيَةٌ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ ۗ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْآيَاتُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ۗ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ

الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَّذِكْرًا لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ
 ﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۗ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
 الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
 الْخٰسِرُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۗ وَلَوْلَا أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى
 لَّجَاءَ هُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۗ وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾
 يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۗ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ ۗ بِالْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾
 يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُولُ ذُو قُوَّةٍ
 مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

And do not debate with the people of the Book unless it is in the best way, except those from them who commit injustice. And say, "We believe in what is sent down to us and sent down to you, and our God and your God is One, and to Him we submit (ourselves)." [46]

And in the same way We have sent down the Book to you. So those to whom We have given the Book believe in it. And from these (the people of Makkah) there are ones who believe in it. And no one rejects Our verses except the infidels. [47] And you have never been reciting any book before this, nor have you been writing it with your right hand; had it been so, the people of falsehood would have raised doubts. [48] But it (the Qur'ān) is clear verses in the hearts of those who are given knowledge. And no one rejects our verses except the wrongdoers. [49] And they said, "Why is it that no signs (miracles) have been sent down to him from his Lord?" Say, "Signs are only with Allah, and I am only a plain warner." [50] Is it not sufficient for them that We have sent down to you the Book that is being recited to them? Surely in it there is mercy and advice for a people who believe. [51]

Say, "Allah is enough as a witness between me and you. He knows what is in the heavens and the earth. And those who believe in falsity and do not believe in Allah,

those are the losers. [52] And they ask you to bring the punishment soon. And had there not been an appointed time, the punishment would have come to them. And it will surely come to them suddenly while they will not be aware. [53] And they ask you to bring the punishment soon. And surely the *Jahannam* is going to overwhelm the disbelievers, [54] the Day when the punishment will envelop them from above them and from under their feet and He (Allah) will say, "Taste what you used to do."

[55]

Commentary

وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ ^{فِصْلِهِ} إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا (And do not debate with the people of the Book unless it is in the best way, except those from them who commit injustice. - 29:46). It means that if one has to get involved in a discussion or debate with the people of the book, he should present his arguments in an affable manner. For instance, it is prudent to answer an impudent remark with politeness, the rage with mildness, and uncivilized tumult with dignified speech.

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا (except those from them who commit injustice - 29:46). But those who wronged you in that they stuck to their stubbornness and obstinacy in return to your dignified gentle speech, they do not deserve this kindness from you. If you give them tit for tat, you are justified, although it is still preferable that they are not replied with rudeness for rudeness, and cruelly for their cruelty. Rather they be treated with courtesy for their rudeness, and with fairness for their unfairness. Some other Qur'anic verses elaborate this advice: وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهِ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِلصَّابِرِينَ (16:126): That is, you are entitled to take revenge of their injustice in equal manner, 'but if you opt for patience, it is definitely much better for those who are patient'.

The advice given in this verse for a polite and dignified treatment in the case of a debate with the people of the book is also accorded in Sūrah An-Nahl with regard to the pagans. At this place the people of the book are especially identified for the reason given right after this. That is, if they were to ponder, there is a great deal common in the two faiths, which should help them accept Islam. Hence it is said قُولُوا آمَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ (And say: We believe in what is sent down to us and sent down to you - 29:46). It means that the Muslims should tell the people of the book at the

time of argument 'we have faith in the revelations sent to us through our Prophet ﷺ, and also on those revelations which were sent to you through your prophets. Hence, you have no reason for any hostility against us'.

Does this verse endorse the authenticity of Torah and Injīl in their present form?

The manner in which this verse endorses the belief of Muslims in Torah and Injīl is their general faith in them, as they were revealed in their original form. It means that whatever Allah Ta'ālā had revealed in these books, they had faith in that. It does not mean that they have faith in their altered and distorted form of the text as well. Many of the alterations were made in the books even before the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and many more were carried out later. This work on amendments has not ceased yet. Muslims have faith only on that part of Torah and Injīl that were revealed on Sayyidnā Mūsā عليه السلام and Sayyidnā 'Īsā عليه السلام respectively. The altered part of the books is excluded from that.

Torah and Injīl in their present form can neither be believed nor rejected altogether

It is recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ Āl- Bukhārī that Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah رضي الله عنه has reported that the People of the Book used to read Torah and Injīl in their original language, Hebrew, but for Muslims they would relate only its translation in Arabic. the Holy Prophet ﷺ instructed the Muslims in this regard that they should neither believe nor reject what they (Jews and Christians) tell them, and instead simply say **أَنَا بِالَّذِي أَنْزَلَ إِلَيْنَا وَأَنْزَلَ إِلَيْكُمْ** (We believe in what is sent down to us and sent down to you - 29:46). That is 'We have symbolic faith in that what was revealed on your prophets, but what you are telling us we do not consider it as authentic. Therefore, we abstain from endorsing or rejecting it'.

The status of the narrations of the People of the Book quoted by the commentators in their commentaries is also the same. The object of their reproduction in the commentaries is meant to highlight their historical position. They cannot be used for determining what is permitted (*ḥalāl*) and what is not permitted (*ḥarām*).

مَا كُنْتُمْ تَتْلُوا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ بِيَمِينِكُمْ إِذَا لَارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُونَ (And you have never been reciting any book before this, nor have you been writing it with your right hand, had it been so, the people of falsehood would have

raised doubts. - 29:48). That is 'Before the revelation of the Qur'ān you could neither read nor write, rather you were unlettered (أُمِّي). If it was not so, and you were literate, then there could have been a possibility of doubt for the infidels to put the blame that you were repeating what you had read in the earlier books, Torah and Injil, and it was not a new revelation sent down on you by way of prophethood.'

It was a great honour and miracle for the Holy Prophet ﷺ to be unlettered

Allah Ta'ālā had demonstrated so many evident and clear miracles to prove the prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and it was one of those miracles that He made him unlettered. Neither he could read any thing nor could he write at all. Forty years of his life were spent in this fashion before the eyes of the people of Makkah. He did not have any acquaintance with the People of the Book wherefrom he could have learnt anything. In fact, there were no People of the Book living in Makkah. Suddenly, at the age of forty years, such a speech started flowing from his mouth that was a miracle not only in its theme and meaning, but also in the pinnacle of its eloquence.

Some scholars have tried to prove that he was unlettered in the beginning, but later Allah Ta'ālā taught him how to read and write. In support of their contention they quote a *ḥadīth* regarding the incident of Ḥudaibiyah, which says that when the agreement between the Holy Prophet ﷺ and the infidels of Makkah was being written, it was started by the Muslims with the words, مِنْ مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ (From Muḥammad, the slave of Allah and His messenger). On this the disbelievers of Makkah objected that his being the messenger of Allah was the real bone of contention, and if they had accepted him as a messenger of Allah, there would not have been any dispute among them. Therefore, they would not accept the words 'and His messenger' along with his name. Sayyidnā 'Alī ؑ had written this agreement, so, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him to erase it, to which he declined out of respect and reverence for him. Then the Holy Prophet ﷺ took the paper in his own hand, and after erasing the words 'His messenger' wrote مِنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ (From Muḥammad, the son of 'Abdullāh).

In this narration, the act of writing has been attributed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ which led some people to think that he knew how to write. But

the correct position is that the act of writing was attributed to him in the narration as a colloquial expression. It is a fairly common idiom spoken quite widely that if someone gets something written by an ascribe, the writing is attributed to the former, even though he has not written it himself. The other possibility is that Allah Ta'ālā made him write this bit miraculously on this occasion. Also, by writing just a few words, one cannot be called a literate, but would still remain an unlettered. Furthermore, it would not be an honour for him to be labelled as literate, rather the honour is in him being an unlettered.

Verses 56 - 63

يَعْبَادِي الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَاسِعَةٌ فَإَيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۖ نِعْمَ أَجْرُ الْعَمِلِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
يَتَوَكَّلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا ۗ اللَّهُ يَرِزُقُهَا
وَأَيَّاكُمْ ۗ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ ۗ فَنُي
يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ ۗ
إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً فَأَحْيَاهُ الْآرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولَنَّ اللَّهُ ۗ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۗ
بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

O My slaves who believe, surely My earth is vast. So, Me alone you worship. [56] Every person has to taste death, then to Us you are to be returned. [57] And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall accommodate them in mansions of the Paradise beneath which rivers flow, where they will live for ever. Excellent is the reward of the workers, [58] who

observe restraint patiently and place their trust in their Lord alone. [59]

And how many an animal there is that does not carry its provision. Allah gives provision to it as well as to you, and He is the All-Hearing, the All-knowing. [60] And if you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth and has subjugated the sun and the moon, they will certainly say, "Allah". How then are they driven aback? [61] Allah extends provision to whom He wills from His slaves, and straitens it (for whom He wills). Surely Allah knows every thing well. [62]

And if you ask them as to who sends down water from the sky, then revives the land with it, they will certainly say, "Allah". Say, "Praise belongs to Allah." But most of them do not understand. [63]

Commentary

From the very beginning of this Sūrah until now the enmity of the infidels toward Muslims, their rejection of the Oneness of God and prophethood of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and putting hurdles in the way of truth and believers were described. In the above verses a way out of this entanglement is suggested in order to come out of the turmoil and spread and propagate the truth, and establish justice – the common name for this action is *hijrah* (migration). It means to leave the hometown and land where one is forced to speak and act against the truth.

Command in connection with *hijrah* and removal of doubts encountering in its way

إِنَّ أَرْضِيْ وَاسِعَةٌ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُونِ (Surely My earth is vast. So, Me alone you worship - 29:56). Allah Ta'ālā has made it clear that His land is very vast and no one should have the excuse that he could not observe the Oneness of Allah, and could not worship Him because in a certain city or country the infidels were in power. It is made clear in these verses that the Muslims should leave the land for the sake of Allah where they are forced to get involved in infidelity and sin, and should try to find out a place for living where they could abide by the commands of Allah Ta'ālā, and persuade others also to follow the same. This is what *hijrah* is all about.

During the course of migration one is likely to encounter, as a rule, two types of risks, which may hold him back from migration. The first risk

is to his life in that the infidels and his adversaries would come in his way, and in order to obstruct his move might take up arms to finish him. In addition, there could be a possibility of his being caught by adversaries on his way out. Hence, there is yet another risk to his life. The answer to this problem is given in the next verse: **كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ** (Every person has to taste death - 29:57) that is, no one has any escape from death anywhere in any situation. Therefore, it should not be the trait of a Muslim to be afraid of death, because despite all possible defences one may arrange for himself, death will overcome him. And it is also part of a believer's faith that death cannot come before the time Allah has determined. Therefore, fear of death should not be an impediment in one's decision about his staying at a certain place or leaving it. If death comes during the course of following a command from Allah Ta'ālā, it would bring eternal blessings and comforts, which one will get in the Hereafter, as stated in the next two verses: **وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ** **وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ غُرَفًا تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا** (And those who believe and do righteous deeds, We shall accommodate them in mansions of the Paradise beneath which rivers flow, where they will live for ever - 29:58).

The other risk involved in *hijrah* (migration) is about the arrangement of sustenance in the strange land. One does manage the sustenance at one's own place through employment, trade, cultivation, or inherited land, but on migration all that is left behind. So, how would he manage the sustenance in the new environment? Answer to this apprehension is given in the next three verses by saying that you regard the mundane possessions and arrangements as the cause of your sustenance, but who has given you all this? It is your mistake to consider that you have arranged it all on your own. Without the help and will of Allah nothing could be procured. If He wills, one gets unlimited sustenance without any visible means, and if He does not, then despite all sorts of visible means, one does not get anything. For elaborating this point first it is said: **وَسَكَتَيْنِ مِّنْ دَابَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا وَإِيَّاكُمْ** (And how many an animal there is that does not carry its provision. Allah gives provision to it as well as to you, - 29:60), that is, 'You should ponder over the fact that there are innumerable animals on earth who do not collect and store their sustenance, nor do they worry about its collection. But Allah Ta'ālā provides them their sustenance daily by His grace'. This applies to almost

all animals, except a few. For instance, ants and rats are two such animals that store their food. Ants do not come out of their holes in winter; hence store the food during the summer season. Among the birds crow is the only one that collects food in its nest, but then forgets it. Thus, all the countless animals living on earth are those who neither collect their food for the next day, nor do they have means to do so. It is stated in a *ḥadīth* that all the birds set off from their nests at dawn in a state of hunger, and return in the evening satiated. They all get their sustenance daily from the bounty of Allah Ta‘ālā, and the practice goes on throughout their life-time.

After stating the real source of sustenance for all, that is the bounty of Allah Ta‘ālā, it is said that if you ask the infidels as to who has created the earth and the skies, or who controls the movement of the sun and the moon, or who brings in the rain, and who makes the vegetation grow; then even they will admit that it is all controlled and done by One entity, that is Allah Ta‘ālā. In the next sentence it is advised to ask them as to why do they then worship any other than Allah and regard it as their mentor. From the next verse *وَلَكِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ* (And if you ask them as to who has created the heavens and the earth - 29:61) until the end of the *rukū‘* this subject continues.

In short, the second impediment in the way of *hijrah* is one's worry for sustenance, but that too is based on wrong assumptions. Provision of sustenance is not in the hands of its resources, but it is a direct gift of Allah Ta‘ālā. It was He who had provided the sustenance in the first place, and it is He who would provide it at the second place. Therefore, this second assumed apprehension should also not come in the way of *hijrah*.

When does Hijrah become obligatory?

The meaning and definition of *Hijrah* and its blessings and auspiciousness has been detailed in Sūrah An-Nisā’ under verses 97 to 100. The changes in religious laws in respect of *Hijrah* were described under verse 98 in *Ma'ariful Qur'an* on pages No. 552 V.2 to 558. One aspect of the subject was omitted there, which is being discussed below.

When the Holy Prophet ﷺ migrated from Makkah under instructions from Allah Ta‘ālā, and in turn instructed all the Muslims to do the same,

provided they had the means, at that time, it was obligatory for all Muslims to migrate. No man or woman was exempt from this rule. The only exemption was given to those who did not have the means to migrate.

At that time migration was not just compulsory but was also regarded as a sign of being Muslim. One who did not migrate, despite having the means for it, was not considered a Muslim, and was treated like an infidel. This point has been elaborated in Sūrah An-Nisā' verse 89 حَتَّىٰ يُهَاجِرُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ (unless they migrate in the way of Allah - 4:89). In those days the position of *hijrah* was like professing the *kalimah* (لا اله الا الله). As one is accepted in Islam only after recitation of this *kalimah* (that is after testifying that he had accepted Islam as his faith), the same way it was regarded necessary to migrate to be a Muslim if one had the means. Similarly, as those were exempt from recitation of the *kalimah* who could not speak, those were also exempt from migration who did not have the means for it. This is also mentioned in verse 98 of Sūrah An-Nisā' إِلَّا الْمُسْتَضْعَفِينَ (Except the oppressed - 4:98). As for those who stayed on in Makkah, despite having the means to migrate, they were warned very strongly of *jahannam* in verse 97 of Sūrah An-Nisā' إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَفَّيْتُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةَ (الَى) فَأُولَٰئِكَ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ (Those whom the angels take while they had wronged themselves, (to them) the angels said, "What were you (involved) in?" They said, "We were oppressed in the earth." They said, "Was not the earth of Allah wide enough that you might have sought refuge in it?" As for such, their shelter is Jahannam. And it is an evil place to return. - 4:97).

After the victory of Makkah, the obligatory command for *hijrah* was withdrawn, because Makkah itself turned into a house of Islam. the Holy Prophet ﷺ issued the following order: لَا هِجْرَةَ بَعْدَ الْفَتْحِ that is, after the victory of Makkah there is no need to migrate from there. The Divine command to migrate from Makkah and later its withdrawal is established from categorical statements of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. The religious jurists have deduced the following rulings from this incident:

Ruling

If someone is not free to hold on to Islam in a city or in a country, and is constrained to act against its teachings or follow the infidel rites, then it becomes obligatory on him to migrate to a place or country where he can

follow and practice rites and teachings of Islam, provided he has the means to do so. However, if one does not have the means to travel or there is no place available to him where he could practice the religious obligations, then he is 'excused' in the religious term.

Ruling

If there is freedom of action to follow one's religion in a non-Muslim country, migration from there is still preferable, though not compulsory or obligatory. For undertaking migration it is not necessary that the country is of non-Muslims, rather it becomes obligatory from a country where the commandments of Allah are flouted openly, no matter even if it is called Islamic on the basis of its Muslim rulers.

Ḥafīz Ibn Ḥajar in *Fatḥ al-Bārī* has adopted this ruling, and it is not in conflict with the principles of *Ḥanafīyyah*. A narration quoted in *Musnad* of Aḥmad on the authority of Sayyidnā Abū Yaḥyā Maulā-Āḏ Zubair Ibn Al-'Awwām رضي الله عنه also endorses this view. The *ḥadīth* narrates that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

أَلْبِلَادُ بِلَادِ اللَّهِ وَالْعِبَادُ عِبَادُ اللَّهِ حَيْثُمَا أَصَبَتْ خَيْرًا فَأَقِم.

'All cities belong to Allah, and all the people are His servants. Therefore, wherever you find goodness you live there'.

Ibn Jarīr has reported with his own chain of narrators that Sayyidnā Sa'īd Ibn Jubair رضي الله تعالى عنه had said 'leave that city where sins and obscenity are common'. And the Imām of Tafsīr, 'Aṭā' رضي الله تعالى عنه, had said that 'run away from the city where you are forced to commit sins'.

Verses 64 - 69

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌّ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ
الْحَيَوَانُ لَوَ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ دَعَاوُا اللَّهَ
مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۗ فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾
لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَهُمْ ۚ وَلِيَتَمَتَّعُوا ۗ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ
يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا مِّنَّا وَيَتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ

يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ ۗ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ۗ وَإِنَّا اللَّهُ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

And this worldly life is nothing but an amusement and play, and the Last Abode is the real life indeed. Only if they know! [64] So when they embark on a ship, they invoke Allah, having their faith purely in Him. But when He saves them (and brings them) to the land, in no time they start committing *shirk* (ascribing partners to Allah), [65] so that they be ungrateful for what We gave to them, and so that they may have enjoyment. So, they will soon come to know (the ill-fate of their attitude). [66]

Did they not see that We have made a peaceful sanctuary (*ḥaram*) while (other) people around them are being snatched away? Do they, then, believe in falsity and reject Allah's grace? [67] And who is more unjust than the one who forges a lie against Allah or belies the truth when it comes to him? Is there not a dwelling in *Jahannam* for disbelievers? [68] And those who strive in Our way, We will certainly take them to Our paths, and indeed Allah is with those who are good in deeds. [69]

Commentary

In the preceding verses it was said about the infidels and disbelievers that if they were asked about the creation of the earth and skies, the solar system, the water cycle and its effect on growth of vegetation, they would reply that all this is created and controlled by Allah Ta'ālā. They did not believe that any one had any involvement in their creation or control, yet in their worship they associate idols with Allah. The reason for this is أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ (Most of them do not understand - 29:63).

At this point the question arises that, after all, they were not insane but intelligent and sensible people. They performed many important and skillful jobs. Then, how have they lost their balance of mind? The answer

to this query is given in the first of the above verses by saying that they are lost in the love of material attractions of the world, which are mortal and would disappear soon. They are totally oblivious of the life hereafter, which would last forever. The life of this world is nothing more than a pastime for amusement and fun, but the real and lasting life is that of Hereafter. وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوَ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ لَهِىَ الْحَيَوَانُ (And this worldly life is nothing but an amusement and play, and the Last Abode is the real life indeed. - 29:64). Here the word *Hayawān* is used in the sense of *ḥayāh* (life) (Qurṭubī).

In this verse the life of this world is held to be an amusement and play. It means that as amusements are finished and gone after a while and do not have any objective or lasting impact, the mundane attractions are also similar in nature.

In the next verse, yet another bad habit of the disbelievers is pointed out. Despite believing that Allah Ta‘ālā is unique and solitary in His creation, they associate idols with Him ignorantly. Then, it is all the more surprising that whenever they are hit by some calamity, they have the firm belief that none of their idols had the power to take them out of that. They know well that it is only Allah who can remove the calamity, and none of their idols could do anything. To elaborate this point a paradigm is illustrated in verse 65: ‘when they are on a journey in the river and there is a risk of their drowning, they call out only Allah to get rid of it, and not any of their idols’. Allah Ta‘ālā listens to their prayer, as being totally helpless at that moment, they break off temporarily all their contacts with false gods and look upon Him only. So, He brings them out of the storm safely. But soon after the wretched people reach the land safely, they forget about His grace in no time, and start calling the idols as His associates. This is the meaning of the verse فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِكِ (29:65).

Note

This verse tells us that when an infidel regards himself totally helpless and calls out Allah Ta‘ālā for help in the belief that no one else can save him from the calamity, at that moment Allah Ta‘ālā accepts the prayer of even an infidel. It is because at that time he is desperate (a *muḍṭarr*), and Allah Ta‘ālā has promised to accept the prayer of a *muḍṭarr*. (Qurṭubī)

The declaration in another verse وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ (And the

prayer of the disbelievers does not but go astray - 13:14) relates to the Hereafter, where no entreaty from them will be accepted when they would appeal for mercy against the torment.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا مَّيْمَنًا (Did they not see that We have made a peaceful sanctuary [*ḥaram*] - 67). In the preceding verses it was described that the deeds and actions of the infidels were foolish and irrational. On the one hand, they accept Allah as the sole Creator and master of every thing, and on the other they associate their self-chiselled idols with Him. Then, it is not that they just believe Him to be the sole Creator of every thing, but they know well that it is only He who brings them out safely from all types of calamities. But after achieving deliverance, they get involved again in associating their idols with Him.

Some disbelievers in Makkah used to put forward the plea that although they accepted Islam as the true faith, but if they were converted to it and followed its tenets, they would be risking their lives against the Arab world, who were deadly against Islam. If they became Muslims, the Arabs would pounce upon them and kill them. (Rūḥ)

In reply to this, Allah Ta'ālā said that this was also a bogus excuse, because He had accorded such an honour and eminence to Makkans, that is not available to any people living anywhere in the world. He had made the entire land of Makkah *ḥaram*. All Arabs respected *ḥaram*, whether they were believers or infidels. They all believed that killing was not allowed there. It was not only the killing and fighting that was banned in the *ḥaram* but the hunting and cutting of trees too were not permitted. If any stranger entered the *ḥaram*, his life would be completely secured. Therefore, putting forward the risk of life as justification for non-acceptance of Islam was only a lame excuse.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا (And those who strive in Our way We will certainly take them to Our paths - 69). The real meaning of *jihād* is to put in all efforts to remove the hurdles in the way of faith. These hurdles include those that are put up by the infidels, for which fighting is at the top pedestal, and also those hurdles that are created by one's own Self and by Satan.

There is a promise in this verse for both types of *jihād*, that Allah Ta'ālā guides those waging *jihād* to the righteous way. It means that

when there is a confusion between evil and virtue, truth and false, and profit or loss, and a wise person wonders which way to adopt, on such occasions Allah Ta‘ālā guides those striving in His way to the path which is straight, righteous and without risk. In other words, He turns their hearts toward a way that may bring the divine blessing and the best results.

Knowledge improves if it is acted upon

Sayyidnā Abū Ad-Dardā’ رضي الله عنه while interpreting this verse has said that the people who strive for acting in accordance with their knowledge are promised by Allah Ta‘ālā in this verse that He will disclose to them some other areas of knowledge that they did not have before. Fuḍayl Ibn ‘Iyād رحمه الله تعالى has given yet another interpretation to this verse, that is, ‘those who strive for knowledge, We make it easy for them to act’. (Maḏharī). والله سبحانه وتعالى اعلم

Alḥamdulillāh

The Commentary on

Sūrah Al-‘Ankabūt

Ends here.